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## INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

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1. unclassified pamphlet, in English, entitled Odessa Dockers, published by the Foreign Languages Publishing House in Moscow. 25X1
2. The text and pictures in the pamphlet describe conditions in the port of Odessa after the Hitler invasion and glorify its restoration, mechanization of operations, living conditions, and training and benefits of its workers.



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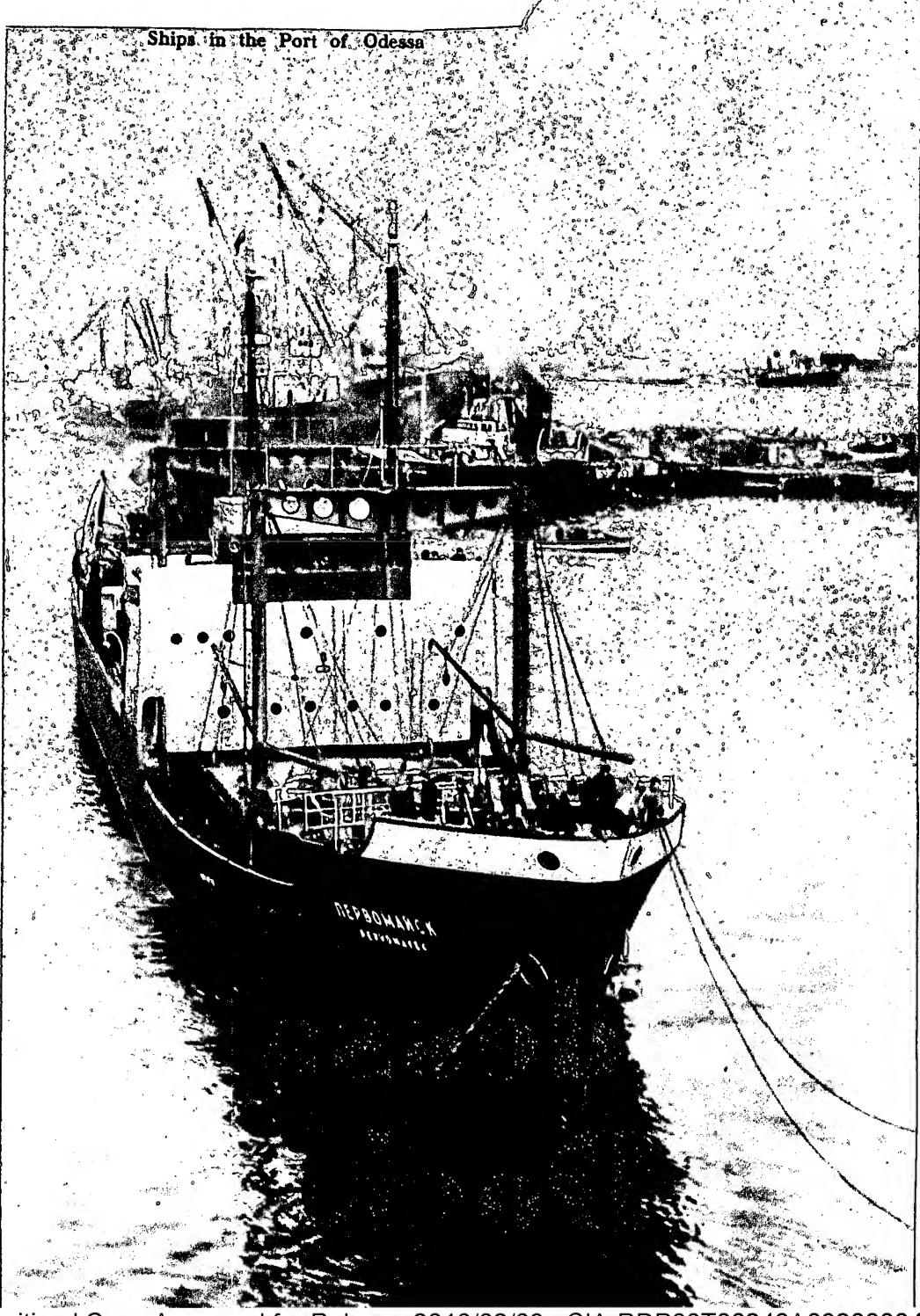
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# Odessa Dockers

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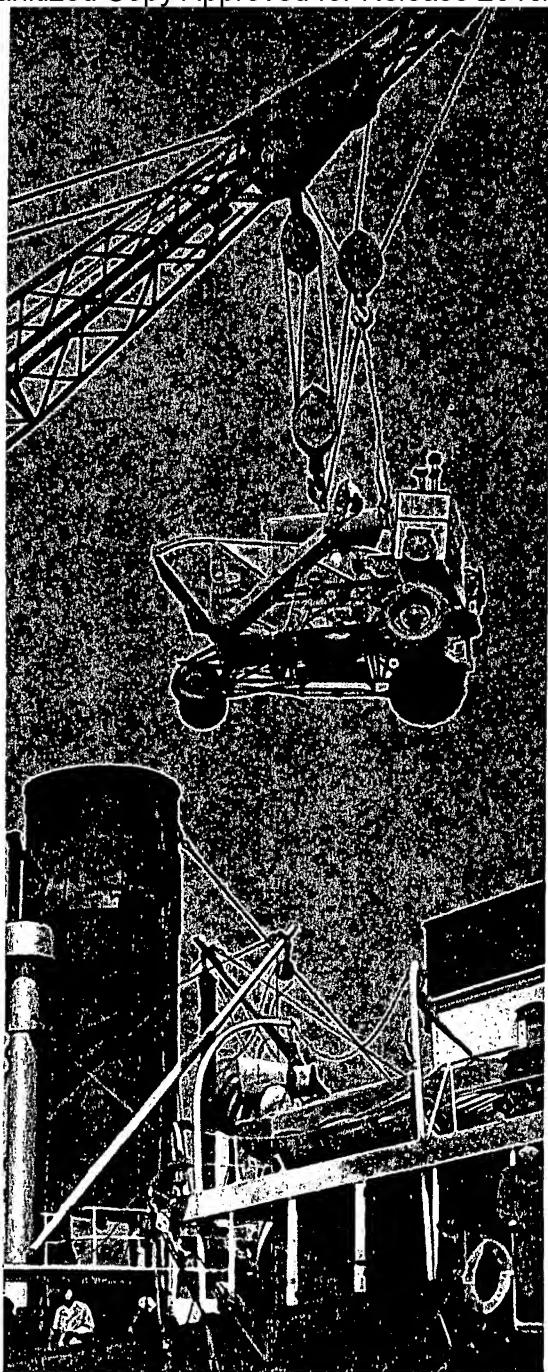
SKETCHES  
OF  
SOVIET LIFE

B. SMOLYAKOV

# *Odessa Dockers*



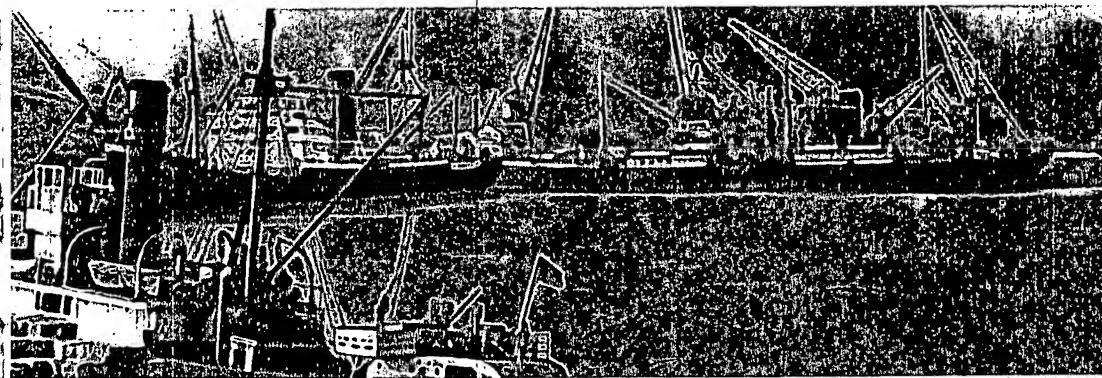
FOREIGN LANGUAGES PUBLISHING HOUSE  
Moscow 1953



Soviet-made self-propelled harvester combines are being loaded on a ship

FROM the corner of the Primorsky Boulevard, where the citizens of Odessa have erected a monument to the great poet Pushkin, you get a view of the port, spreading before you like a panorama. Away down, as far as the eye can see, ships are moored to the quayside, and over them, turning this way and that, swing the latticed arms of cranes. They hoist to the height of a three-story house harvester combines, automobiles, huge steam boilers which from afar look like toys. From time to time you hear the shrill of steamship sirens and the prolonged, high-pitched shriek of shunting engines.

The docks are filled with all sorts of mechanical apparatus that do the heavy work of loading and unloading formerly done by human muscles. Rostislav Lubenov, the chief engineer of the port, informs us that 96.5 per cent of all operations have been mechanized. The traditional docker is vanishing; in the vast majority of cases his work



A view of the Port of Odessa

now consists of operating the machines that load and unload ships—the portal, self-propelled and floating cranes, power trucks, stack pilers and conveyers.

Odessa port, wrecked by the Hitler invaders, has not merely been restored; it has been reconstructed on the most up-to-date technical principles. Nearly everything had to be built anew, for the enemy occupation forces had wrecked 74 per cent of all docking facilities, 60 per cent of the protective structures, 91 per cent of the warehouses, and all the machinery.

It was a sad spectacle that met the eyes of the workers who returned to liberated Odessa and gazed at the lifeless port. Everything that had been created and built by the Russian people in the course of one and a half centuries had been reduced to rack and ruin. But in less than six

months the Port of Odessa was able to receive the first ships.

The captains of English vessels, amazed at the scale of destruction, said sceptically that it would take no less than twenty years to restore the port, but the Soviet State almost completely restored and reconstructed it in only four years.

Unlike the ports in the U.S.A., which are a chaotic jumble of piers, wharves and other structures belonging to different private firms, at the Port of Odessa all the work is distributed among three sections, each of which handles a definite type of cargo. All the work is conducted according to a definite plan, based on the schedule of arrivals and departures of ships. Each section has a permanent staff of workers who work in teams, and is supplied with the necessary machinery. Loading and unloading goes

on all year round in three shifts a day. The amount of cargo handled far exceeds prewar figures, and the portal cranes now in use have a much greater lifting capacity. The port is equipped with floating cranes, a floating coaling crane, a huge mechanized granary, a grain transporter and grain suction pumps with which two men can unload a barge of grain in five or six hours. Formerly, this job required forty men working ten days. Thanks to the extensive mechanization of operations, the number of men employed on loading and unloading work has

been reduced by nine-tenths during the past four years.

In capitalist countries the introduction of machines usually causes unemployment, but in the Port of Odessa not a single man was put out of work for this reason. The labourers received two, three or six months' technical training at a special school that has been set up at the port, acquired new trades, and all remained at the port as skilled operators of machines and mechanisms. They work the conveyer lines and mechanical loaders and serve as motormen on the floating grain elevators. A



Former dock labourer Sergei Gordeichuk has become an electric welder



Pyotr Bryushko is another stevedore turned mechanic—  
he is a riveter in the ship repair yard

large number of the former dockers are now skilled mechanics working in the repair shops; others are managers or assistant managers of warehouses. An important point to note is that all of them received their average pay while attending these training courses.

During the past three years over 3,000 dock workers, includ-

ing 500 men demobilized from the Soviet Army, have learned new trades. The training covered such subjects as safety rules and regulations, draughtsmanship, metallurgy, physics, mechanics, electrotechnics and mathematics. The courses were conducted by university lecturers and by engineers working at the port.



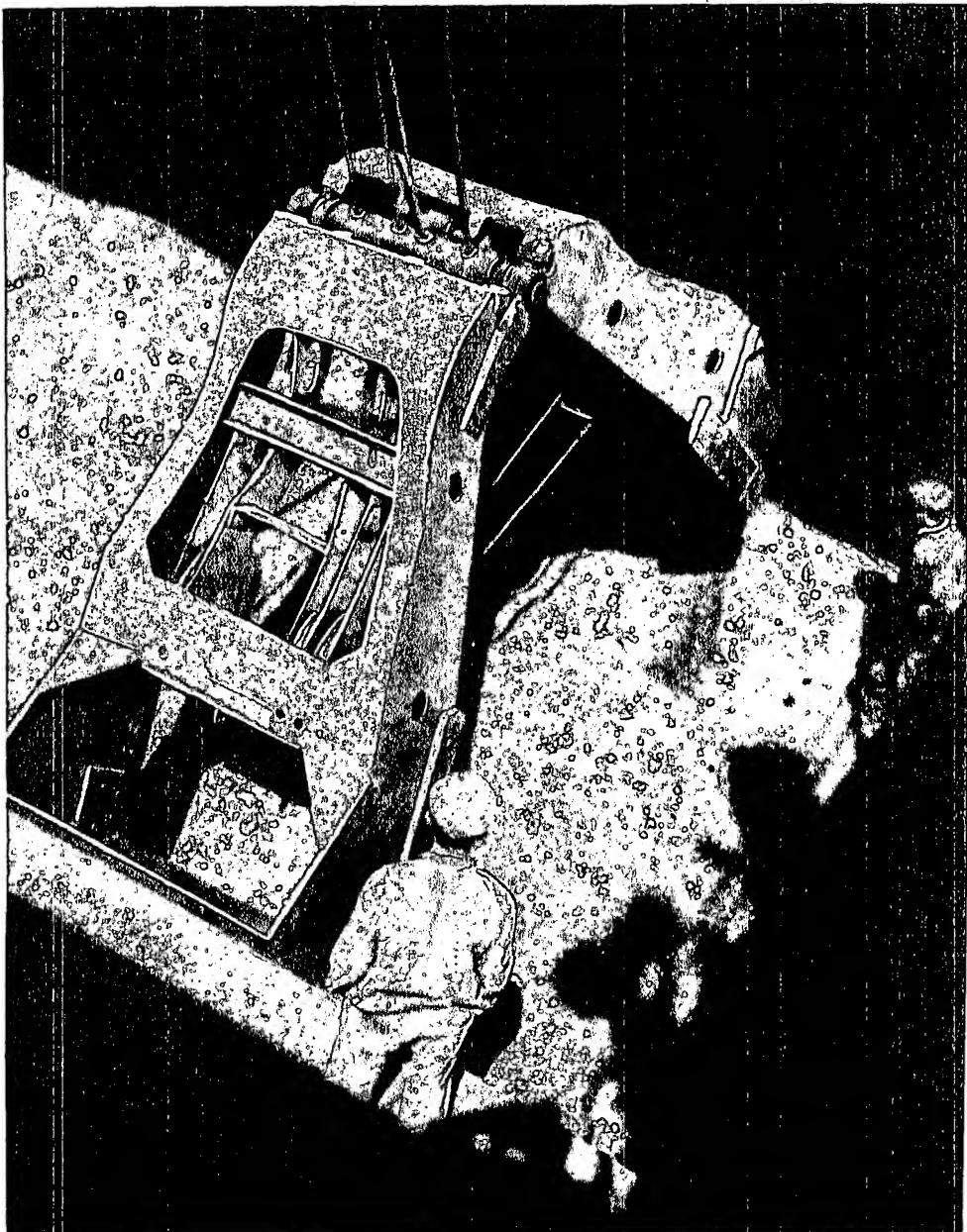
Nikolai Shabinsky, graduate of a six months' training course, now in charge of a coal-loading crane

The Soviet docker is thus a new type of port worker—a skilled and educated operator of intricate machinery. Representative of these new port workers is Vasili Turlenko, senior craneman in Section 2, at the Port of Odessa. He was demobilized from the Soviet Army in 1946 and was given a job at the port. He went through a six months' course of training; after which he worked on portal cranes of various

types. He thoroughly mastered the handling of these machines, achieved high efficiency, and even introduced a number of improvements. One of these was particularly important. On his proposal portal cranes designed to handle only piece goods were altered so they can also handle cargo shipped in bulk. This increased their efficiency and at the same time brought about a considerable saving in electric power.

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This coal-lifter has done away with manual labour in the coal docks.  
All the docker has to do is to show the craneman where to drop the coal.



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Loading and unloading is mechanized not only in the docks but also in the ships' holds. Fyodor Shelest, senior craneman in Section 1, proposed that the lift trucks used for laying out cargoes on the quayside should also be used below deck. This proposal was adopted, and now a stack piler is lowered by crane into the hold where it performs all the heavy work.

Last year alone 116 rationalization proposals made by workers were put into practice.

A group of port engineers, together with the Stakhanovites, organized the loading and unloading of ships according to an hourly schedule. When a ship has to be loaded or unloaded the technological council of the section, together with the workers, draws up a definite schedule and technological chart showing what each team has to do every hour of its shift, what cargoes have to be handled, from what warehouse they are to come, and what mechanical appliances are to be used. This method has considerably increased efficiency in the handling of cargoes and has resulted in a 40 per cent increase in the workers' earnings.

The life of the Odessa docker today is quite unlike the lot of the dock worker in the past. An interesting comparison was made by the veteran docker Andrei

Lysyuk. He is sixty now, and he has gone through a great deal in the course of his life. For years he was a homeless wanderer, roaming from port to port in all parts of the world, occasionally working as a shiphand on a merchantman. This was before the Revolution.

"I began to feel I was a human being only with the coming of the Soviets," says Lysyuk. "And so did the other waterside workers, who formerly used to lug on their backs as much as seventeen tons of cargo a day for a mere pittance. How happy I am that my sons never had to go through anything like that. My oldest son, Leonid, has had an education and is now an engineer and safety inspector. There was no such job in the port before the Revolution. Safety regulations! How many of my mates have been killed by falling into holds either because it was too dark or because the rotten hatch ladders collapsed. Today no job is started until the safety inspector gives permission. Before the Revolution, if anyone dared to demand that guard rails be put on the gangways he'd be kicked out at once. There were always hundreds of homeless 'bums'—that's what they called us then—outside the dock gates eager to get any kind of work. The things you saw in the Port of Odessa



Tannara Kizilova, one of the port's front-rank power truck drivers.

before the Revolution can be seen only in capitalist countries today."

Andrei Lysyuk's second son Nikolai is attending a six months' training course for crane operators and getting his average pay. He doesn't have to worry about his future.

Dock workers are paid at progressive piece rates. Higher rates are paid for night work and

double rates for work on holidays. All workers receive an annual vacation with pay.

Earnings range from 1,000 to 2,000 rubles per month. A meat dinner of three courses at the port canteens costs from 3 to 3.50 rubles. Meals cooked at home cost even less. Consequently, the docker's earnings suffice for buying clothes, domestic furniture, and other requirements.



Stack pilers are extensively used in the port's warehouses

House rent does not exceed four or five per cent of earnings.

Lysyuk's family consists of six persons. Three of them work at the port. When the family returned to Odessa after the city had been liberated from the fascist invaders, they found their home completely ransacked. The Hitlerites had stolen everything. After a short time, however, they were able to refurnish their home and buy new clothes; Lysyuk's sons own motorcycles. When the

oldest son, Leonid, married and his wife had a baby, the family decided to build a cottage in the country. In this they were assisted by the trade union. The port trade union committee, by arrangement with the Executive Committee of the City Soviet of Working People's Deputies, had a former estate assigned to it near the health resort "Arkadia" on which members of the trade union can receive a plot of 1,200 square metres for a cottage and

garden. The Regional Municipal Bank grants those wishing to build a loan of 10,000 rubles to be repaid in seven years. The Ministry for the Merchant Marine assigned funds for building a transformer substation to provide electricity for the workers' cottages.

Lysyuk's family spend the summer in their country cottage, which stands in an orchard—they grow peaches, strawberries, grapes and plums.

In 1948, the average monthly earnings of Soviet dockers were 100 per cent above the prewar year 1940, and in 1950 were 152 per cent above the prewar level.

Maritime transport workers enjoy a number of special privileges. Among other things, they are entitled to higher old-age and permanent disability pensions. They also receive service bonuses: ten per cent after three years' work, another five per cent after the next two years, and an additional two per cent for each subsequent year. Long and devoted service receives recognition from the state in the form of Medals and Orders.

Soviet dockers' real wages do not comprise only what is entered in their paybooks. One must add the benefits all receive from the state insurance fund: pensions, sick pay, cultural services, accommodation in sanatoriums

and rest homes, physical culture and sports facilities, and country holidays for their children.

The dockers have a recreation club, libraries, reading rooms, a polyclinic and medical centres, the best swimming pool in Odessa, and so forth.

Waterside workers often gather in their club in the evenings to listen to lectures on the Stalin plan for transforming Nature, the great construction works of Communism, the latest technical improvements introduced in the Soviet marine transport service, the international situation, etc.

Often the young workers gather round the veteran dockers to hear their reminiscences of the revolutionary struggle in tsarist



Young working girls find it easy to operate a stack piler



The year-old grandson of docker Andrei Lysyuk is ready for his afternoon outing. The whole family is there to see him off. Left to right: Andrei Lysyuk; Larisa, wife of his oldest son Leonid; Leonid Lysyuk and his brother Nikolai

times and of the heroic defence of the city during the second world war.

The working people of Odessa are proud of the fact that in their city arose the first workers' organization in Russia—the South Russian Workers' Union (1875), and that the great Lenin was the

delegate of the Odessa Bolshevik organization at the Third Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.

During the 1905 Revolution the Odessa dock workers fought vigorously against the autocracy, and rendered assistance to the insurgent sailors on the battle-

ship *Potyomkin*. It is with rapt attention that the young folks listen to the stories told about that thrilling time by the veteran docker Mikhail Kodubinsky, who was a participant in those events. He was one of the dockers who carried coal to the revolutionary warship and maintained contact with the insurgent sailors.

The magnificent stairway that leads from the Primorsky Boulevard to the beach was drenched with the blood of workers. Here, on the night of June 15, 1905, the tsarist gendarmes shot down nearly two thousand strikers as they were streaming out of the port, which had been set on fire by police agents.



In addition to his home in town, Andrei Lysyuk has a cottage in the country, near the well-known "Arkadia" health resort. Photo shows him in the garden with his son Nikolai, a craneman in the port

In January 1918, the Odessa dockers took part in the barricade fighting against the counter-revolutionary troops of the Whiteguard generals, and a year later they helped to rout the French interventionists who had occupied the city.

The inhabitants of Odessa contributed a glorious page to the annals of the Great Patriotic War the Soviet people waged against the Hitler invaders. Although cut off on land, they, together with the men of the Soviet Army, kept the fascist hordes at bay for



Veteran dockers M. Kodubinsky and I. Vetrov tell their younger comrades assembled in the dockers' club about the great Russian writer Maxim Gorky, a stevedore in the Port of Odessa in the 'nineties

seventy days. Eighteen picked Hitler divisions were demolished at the walls of this heroic city. Under constant enemy fire the dockers unloaded the Soviet ships which arrived at the port during those memorable days.

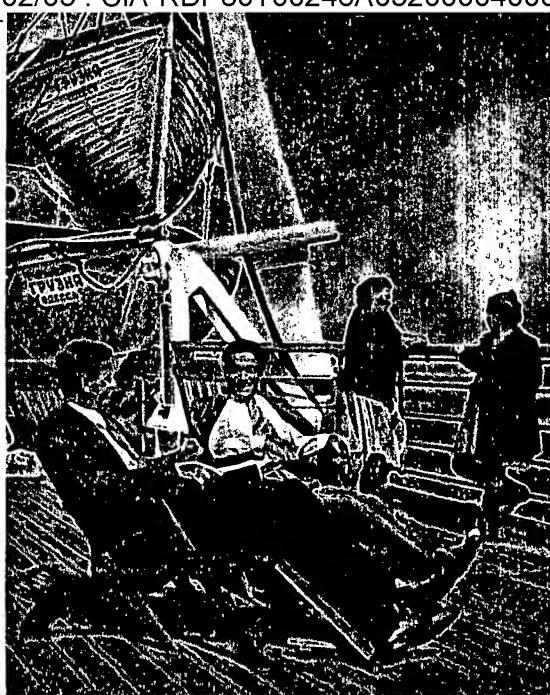
On one of the quays in the port there is a red two-story brick building. On the wall facing the sea is a memorial tablet with a carved inscription relating that on September 2, 1941, under continuous enemy artillery fire and air bombing, "the dockers of the Port of Odessa unloaded ahead of schedule the motor ship *Belostok* which had brought an important cargo of military supplies for the defenders of Odessa."

This was the last ship to arrive in the besieged city.

The militant, revolutionary career of the Odessa dockers has now been crowned with all the blessings of peace.

At a long table, dockers are sitting in the open air, waiting for the change of shift. Some of them are playing dominoes, others are reading newspapers, still others are just basking in the sun, smoking and watching the loading of cargoes. Soviet ships are lined up at the docks.

A foreign vessel is moored at dock No. 1. It has come to get Russian grain. Soviet agricultural



Repair shops mechanic Sergei Katkov (left) and docker Alexei Nikiforov, like many other workers at the port, spent their vacation at a southern health resort. Photo shows them en route to the resort

machines, iron castings, pipes and boilers, rolls of wire and motor trucks are laid out on the quay ready to be shipped to the People's Democracies.

The Soviet steamship *Vostok* is approaching the eastern entrance of the bay; it is returning from Italy with a cargo of lemons. On the dock everything is ready to receive her. The portal cranes have moved up, the power trucks are ready. Soon, loaded by cranes, these trucks will be racing one after another to the

warehouse where the boxes will be mechanically stacked. The work is performed with rhythmic precision and does not require great physical effort. Exactly twenty-nine hours later, the time specified in the schedule, the ship is unloaded. The captain thanks the dockers and mentions in passing that in the Italian

port it took four days and nights to load the ship.

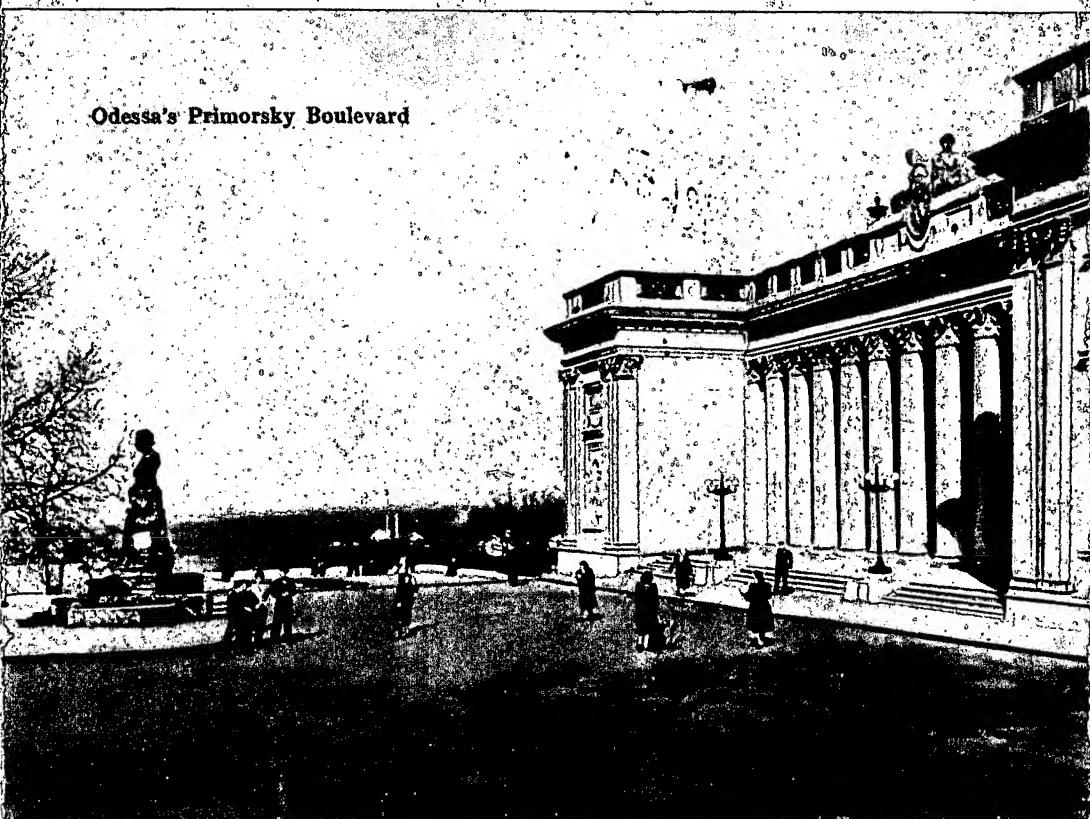
In Soviet ports the trade of stevedore, that is, of the man who lugs cargoes on his back—has been abolished. Soviet dockers are skilled machine operators trained at the expense of the state.

Sports of every kind are popular among the dock workers. Dockers V. Gumenko (left) and M. Bychkov, both ex-servicemen, prefer boxing and heavy athletics—it is the only kind of "heavy work" they do.



Young dock workers stroll after  
their shift down a boulevard  
overlooking the sea.





Odessa's Primorsky Boulevard

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This publication is a reprint of an article published in the magazine

**SOVIET UNION**

Cover: Pyotr Bobrinsky, former dock labourer and now a crane operator in the Port of Odessa. 96.5 per cent of the loading and unloading in the port is mechanized

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